**THE ORDINARY MEETING OF NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON MONDAY 3rd JULY 2017, IN THE VILLAGE HALL, NORTH NIBLEY, AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** Mr K Brown, (Chair) Mrs J Burton; Mr S Hale, Mr K Larkin, Mr D Palmer, Mr D Purnell, Mr L. Smitherman. Matt Lloyd, BT representative.

**District Councillors:** Mr G Butcher, Mr K Tucker

**County Councillor**: Dr J Cordwell

**The Clerk:** Mrs E Oakley

**The Chairman opened** the Parish Council Meeting.

1. **The Chairman invited apologies.** Apologies had been received from District Cllr C Braun.
2. **Declaration of Interests**. The Chairman invited members to declare any Interests relating to this Meeting.There were no declarations of interest.
3. **The Council approved and signed the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 5th June as a true record.** The Minutesof the June Ordinary Meeting of the Council had previously been distributed to all members and displayed on the public notice boards and the website**. All members agreed the Minutes should be signed, as a true and accurate record**. The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **The Council noted matters arising from the Minutes, not covered by agenda items.**
* **Internal Audit.** The clerk reported that the three document summary itemising the results of the internal audit had been received from GAPTC and circulated to councillors. Consequently a separate column for any future Section 137 transactions has been added to the council cash book spreadsheet to run from 1st April through the current 2017/18 financial year.
* **External Audit.** The clerk reportedthe financialinformation for the 2016/17 financial year was finalised to meet the Grant Thornton deadline and the documentation posted as signed-for delivery. An acknowledgement was subsequently received. The audit format this year was detailed requiring explanations of variance. However, this is the last year of the current contract with Grant Thornton and from next year external audit requirements will change with a new requirement to upload key annual and financial summaries to council websites.
* **The exercise of public rights.** The external auditor requires publication of council data on the council website for a period of 30 days**.** Annual governance statements and accounting statements are required to be uploaded to the website for a period of 30 days commencing 3rd July.
* **Parishioner correspondence.** The clerk had received copies of two thank you letters from a parishioner concerning cemetery items (agenda item).
* **Small Business rate relief.** The clerk had received a further request for information from the district authority and completed this to ensure continuity of rate relief in the current year.
* **Website.** Recent statistics showed a major peak in users of the council website at the end of May. There were otherwise more regular peaks and troughs of usage throughout the month as a whole. There was a 52% repeat visitor rate throughout May. The clerk had subsequently received data for June which showed an increase in visitor numbers for June over May.
* **Joint Cluster Group.** The clerk had written to the service manager of the group informing him of councillor feedback on various aspects of the group to include a request for receipt of timely minutes.
* **Grant monies for the Talking Newspapers.** Following the recent awarding of a £50 grant, Talking Newspapers are keen to keep in touch. The clerk had received an invitation to their AGM at Kingshill House, Dursley, on the 30th June and an invitation to attend one of their Friday editing sessions.
* **The grass verge adjacent to the pavement on the B4060, outside ‘Cotshill’**. Following reports the nettles, weeds and grass are so tall they obscured views for pedestrians, the clerk had reported this issue and received a phone call shortly after to confirm that the area would be strimmed the next day. A parishioner confirmed the work had then been carried out.
* **James Storey**. The clerk had written formally to him on behalf of the council by signed-for delivery and received a phone call from him. A cemetery site visit was subsequently arranged, (agenda Item).

 **BT Phone boxes consultation.** The clerk had requested a further update on the outcome of the BT consultation earlier this year and awaited an update.

* **Neighbourhood Warden.** The clerk had not automatically received but had re-requested a monthly summary from the Neighbourhood Warden with a view to including this with the Clerk’s Update report to council each month. The clerk had subsequently received a brief report from the Neighbourhood Warden for June which had been circulated to councillors.
* **Housing Enabler.** The clerk had received written confirmation from Cllr C Braun that an appointment had been made and the successful applicant had very relevant experience in a previous role and would be in post from mid-July. The clerk agreed to make contact with the new post holder.
1. **The Chairman closed the Meeting for Public Discussion and Questions.**

**The Chairman re-opened** the Meeting without further discussion.

1. **The Council considered and commented upon the following Planning Application:**

**Application Number: S.17/1266/HHOLD, Location: Cockrells Corner, Pitt Court, North Nibley.**Application Type: Householder Application. Description: Proposed study extension.

The council agreed to make no comment.

**Application Number: I.e.S.17/1169/AGR. Fortune Farm.** The council noted the clerk’s request for consultation on this agricultural application in line with previous council requests for consultation on agricultural items. Consultation was declined by the District Planning Authority in this case.

1. **To note the following Planning Applications decisions by Stroud DC Planning:**

**Application Number: S.17/0986/HHOLD.** 4 Stancombe View, North Nibley, Dursley. Proposed greenhouse and summerhouse.Permission.

**Application Number: S.17/0880/FUL.** Land adjacent to Swinhay Small Holding, North Nibley, erection of barn style stabling and menage. Application refused**.** If an appeal followed the council requested the clerk contact the Highways Officer.

1. **To receive a written District Council Report. The Council received a** written report from District Councillor K Tucker (verbally) on behalf of the ward’s District Councillors. Councillors confirmed that they had received from Cllr K Tucker separate information concerning the proposed relocation of the Wotton Under Edge post office.
2. **To receive a written County Council Report.** **The Council received** a written County Council Report from County Councillor Dr J Cordwell. The Chairman thanked Councillor Cordwell for his report who drew attention to the local initiative to confirm the safety of tall buildings following the recent major fire in London.
3. **To receive and discuss Reports of Committees and Meetings** **attended by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.**

**Cllr Dave Palmer** had previously circulated notes from a Fastershire meeting on Broadband. He reported that a postcode check on the Fastershire website indicated that Gigaclear would be providing fibre to the premises (FTTP) to the area sometime in the future. Their standard contract is for 50Mb upload and download. This is still at the planning stage. Gigaclear can install to clusters that are outside their normal rollout based on registered businesses with a special grant if commissioned to do so by Fastershire.

**The clerk** informed councillors of the AGM for the Cotswold Vale Talking Books service that she had attended at the end of June. A formal thank you to the Parish Council on receipt of its recent donation was offered and minuted at the AGM. A tour of the studio facilities showed the editorial and recording work that was being undertaken on a weekly basis. Overall, the services of the charity were much appreciated, but there was needed an initiative to increase numbers benefiting from the service. The clerk undertook to contact the secretary to request a form of wording for an article that could be included in the next edition of On The Edge. This would confirm the service covered the area and that new listeners were welcome.

1. **Parish Council Finances.**

**11(1) To approve the Invoices and draw up cheques for items on the enclosed Payments Schedule.** The Council received and approved:

* **GAPTC internal audit services. £150.00**
* **Stroud Designs, cemetery sign. £30.00**
* **Village Hall meeting room hire, December 2016 to April 2017. £68.00**
* **University of West of England, printing of annual insert to OTE. £21.38**

 **11 (2) To consider quotes for scheduled work.** Cllr Les Smitherman confirmed he had requested a second quote from the same contractor as previously discussed, but for a lighter weight gate construction with a smaller gap at a similar price to the quote discussed by councillors at the June council meeting. The new quote was due the following Tuesday. Councillors agreed the Chairman would have authority to progress the gate project once the second quote was received. The Chairman had previously received a quote for £250 as the cost of hanging the gate. The location of the second gate would be on Fountain Forestry land. Councillors proposed the owners be informed of the price of the first gate for their information.

**11 (3)To consider update of council annual grant application process.** The clerk drew councillor’s attention to the previous minute at the March council meeting which had noted the timescales for submission of the Council’s grant application form by applicants need to be brought forward to earlier to give more time for consideration. Similarly more information would ideally be requested from applicants as to the overall size of their project and the proportion of this that the grant applied for would constitute. During the following discussion Cllr L Smitherman stated concern that grants previously received had not always been spent on the items the original application form had stated the monies were applied for. Other possible conditions for consideration discussed by councillors were that some funding be conditional on the work being carried out and that project applicants be required to contribute their own monies. The clerk confirmed that the council had until the coming autumn to revisit the grant application procedure and the chair requested this item included on the August agenda. District Cllr K Tucker undertook to send the clerk and chair details of the Co-op’s grant application process for comparison. Cllr D Palmer confirmed that in his role on the Tyndale Monument Trust he would clarify that grant monies received from the council earlier in the year were allocated to the lightening conductor project.

**11 (4) To consider update of council financial regulations document**. The clerk confirmed that following council’s consideration of the annual review of this document at the June council meeting she had updated the master document with the agreed amendments.

**11(5) To consider update of council risk management policy document**. The clerk confirmed that following council’s consideration of the annual review of this document at the June council meeting she had updated the master document with the agreed amendments.

**11(6) To consider update of council asset register**. The clerk confirmed that following council’s consideration of the annual review of this document at the June council meeting she had updated the master document with the agreed amendments. The initial first page listing now included ownership of the speedar gun, tripod and high Vis jackets. A previous amendment had been made this year to include the purchase of the defibrillator the previous year, as this was an amendment requested by the external auditor for the previous year. Cllr L Smitherman raised the need for a parish council locked cabinet in a store room ideally at the village hall for items regularly used by the council. The clerk undertook to contact the village hall committee to request this.

1. **(7) Clerks’ Quarterly wages.** Clerk’s Quarter 1 wages were approved by the council.
2. **(8) Clerks Quarterly broadband**. Clerk’s Quarter 1 broadband and home office usage were approved by the council.

**11(9) Clerk’s Quarterly expenses**. Clerk’s Quarter 1 expenses were approved by council but clarification was requested on costs for the quarter of printing documents for the audit process as well as papers for clerk and chair’s reference at council meetings. Cllr L Smitherman undertook to supply details of a cost effective instant ink cartridge replacement scheme and Cllr K Brown offered to print his own chair’s documents for council meetings in order to manage future administrative costs. Councillors also discussed the cost effectiveness of replacing the current council printer with a new laser, or black and white, printer.

**11(10) Clerk’s Quarterly mileage.** Clerk’s Quarter 1 mileage expenses were approved by council.

**12/ To receive and approve Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Reports.**

The clerk informed councillors an inspection had revealed the contractor had trimmed grass around memorial plaque edges as requested. A new memorial plaque as previously arranged had been installed in the wall to the left hand side of existing plaques. The clerk has received a thank you letter from the parishioner whose flowers on a relative’s grave had been cut in error, and also a copy of the thank you letter that the same parishioner had written to the contractor. The Burial Clerk has received a similar thank you letter from the same person.

The chairman, councillors and clerk had met the selected contractor in the cemetery mid-month to discuss the new memorial garden and cemetery work. The meeting in the cemetery discussed the work to be carried out. This was agreed in two phases. The memorial garden wall and associated works would be carried out relatively soon to take an estimated one and a half to two weeks with two men on site using a small dumper truck. Cllr Ken Brown offered to use the earth displaced in the cemetery on the farm. The second phase of work to improve cemetery paths was likely to be carried out in August. The clerk requested more details in writing of the first phase in order to present to council and also for information to be given to parishioners via On The Edge and council website. The need for public notices on the gate for visitor information were also discussed with the contractor.

The contractor confirmed he carries out his own risk assessment for each project and will further liaise with the clerk about these. The moving of the southern arm of the cemetery wall will affect the position of a small group of existing memorial vases on a right hand shelf. These will be moved to the right hand side of their existing position not far from their original position. Cllr D Palmer undertook to acquire names and contacts of the relatives involved from the Burial Clerk to inform them of the changed position. He confirmed he has subsequently photographed these items and will liaise with the families affected.

Councillors considered the risk and environmental statements and two method statements received by the clerk from the selected contractor for the new cemetery work. There were some queries the clerk was requested to address to the contractor in response: 1/The method statement for the footpaths has as its introduction the same text as for the memorial garden method statement. 2/The actual final height of the new memorial garden area. Councillors felt from the measurements given that there could be a disparity in height once completed. (That is once 150mm topsoil is removed, the membrane laid and then 20mm Cerney stone placed on top to a depth of 50mm). 3/Proposed start date for the work. 4/ As regards the method statement for the paths work, can you confirm the depth of the bases of the paths, and also the final depth of the paths as a whole once the tarmac is laid on top of the bases. 5/Additionally in the areas where topsoil will be levelled on the outside of the edgings to form gentle slops to the paths, can you confirm the angle and depth these slopes would be once work is completed.

The Burial Clerk had received a request for sale of a new double burial plot. She will confirm arrangements in due course. The chair reported the Burial Clerk had recently requested his signature for two interments in the cemetery. Councillors noted a mound thirty feet or so down the main path of the cemetery that needed investigation. Cllr D Palmer agreed to attend to this.

Cllr D Palmer reported that small memorial stones currently have flowers placed down the side by relatives. However, if the membrane around memorials was in place, then future memorials would need a flower holder in them in order to preserve the membrane surface from holes. Councillors agreed the cemetery regulations would require amendment in due course in terms of the specification needed for future memorials. Councillors agreed that once the first phase of the new cemetery works were completed then the regulations could be reviewed.

A recent inspection of the closed churchyard wall revealed this continues in a reasonable condition but there is a large stone partially protruding from the wall as identified in previous inspections that will require monitoring.

**13/To consider options for the cemetery hedge.** Cllr D Palmer reported that he had engaged in cutting back a section of the cemetery hedge against the railings on the main road side for the purpose of installing the new cemetery sign to request a parking space be reserved. However, this revealed the unfeasibility of this exercise due to the size and depth of the hedge and the lack of visibility for the sign if the existing hedge were to be retained. Councillors consequently agreed that the hedge be removed. The clerk undertook to secure two quotes for this under two main options. The first for the full length of the hedge along the entire cemetery boundary on the road side. The second for the length of the hedge from the gate onwards to the far end of the boundary on the road side.

**14/ To receive a broadband project update. (**This item was brought forward to a higher position on the agenda due to the special attendance of Matt Lloyd from BT who provided councillors with an update). Matt Lloyd explained that to blow fibre through to cabinet itself was now estimated at six to eight weeks from completion. The blow fibre tubing had to be re-done where previous work by a sub-contractor had proved unsatisfactory following inspection. However, once the fibre was there, and following testing, it would then be available to network providers. There was also work needed to get the spine cabling to the cabinet and there maybe potential for blockages. In answer to Cllr D Palmer’s enquiry, he confirmed it was possible to apply for shortened notice periods in some circumstances if these were encountered. Councillors expressed their disappointment that that the project appeared to be in the same position as that of late May and June. It was now July and no recent activity had been seen at all in the vicinity of the cabinet. Matt Lloyd committed to a reserve seven to eight when asked to state on a scale of one to ten if the super-fast broadband would be available in the parish by the 1st September. However he undertook to make contact with the clerk and chair within four weeks to supply some dates for the project having secured these from his own office. He would also work to improve the visibility of the parish project within his own senior management teams.

**15/ To consider updated Health and Safety policy.** The clerk reported she hadstarted the process of updating the health and safely policy and had contacted the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town councils who advised a risk management element for the cemetery be included. Councillors advised there was likely an existing risk management policy to cover the cemetery.

**16. To receive for information details of Correspondence received.** The clerk confirmed she had received details together the URL link for the customer satisfaction survey from Highways. The clerk undertook to circulate these to councillors for receipt of councillor comments to meet the deadline

for Highway’s receipt of council’s overall comments by the end of July.

**There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.**

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 7th August at 7.30 pm.**